

From: LeFlore, Rick@Parks
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2014 4:47 PM
To: Conway, Kevin@CALFIRE; Archambault, Laurie@Parks
Cc: Hannigan, Edith@CALFIRE
Subject: RE: grazing and State Parks PRC and policies

Hi Kevin: Thank you for the opportunity to check in with the RMAC tomorrow afternoon. Unfortunately, I am completely booked up on Tuesday and can't make it to the meeting – I don't work in the Resources Building, so I don't have the advantage of at least being able to drop in on the group. I've pasted below a summary write-up on the Hollister Hills SVRA grazing program, hopefully it will be of some use to you. Many thanks – Rick.

Summary of key points of the Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area (HHSVRA) grazing program.

- Separate originating legislation for State Parks' Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division, enactment of Chappie-Z'berg Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Act in 1971, with subsequent re-enactments.
 - i. Established OHMVR Division with separate dedicated funding sources (OHV Trust Fund).
 - ii. Emphasis on "conservation of land resources", vs. "preservation" on OHMVR Division managed and/or funded properties.
- PRC 5090.35 established soil loss standards and habitat protection plans as key elements of SVRA operations and management.
 - i. Inventory of wildlife populations and their habitats mandated each SVRA.
 - ii. Wildlife habitat protection program to sustain viable species composition specific to each SVRA in place.
 - iii. Annual monitoring component required to determine whether the soil conservation standards and habitat protection programs are being met at each SVRA.
- OHMVR Division will consider grazing only if it's found to be the appropriate management tool.
- OHMVR Division will not graze for the sole purpose of income generation.
- Environmental scientist staff dedicated to each OHMVRD District (unit oversight), with support from OHMVR Division Headquarters functions.
- Grazing program in place at HHSVRA approximately 15 years.
 - i. Hudner-Renz acquisition, adjoining existing and operating HHSVRA, in mid-1990s. Unable to open for SVRA purposes until General Plan/EIR Amendment approved, budget process complete.
 - ii. New properties used historically for agricultural purposes (dryland grain production, year-long cattle grazing).
 - iii. Pilot program started 1994 with same grazer as present under various lease agreements.
 - iv. Several plant and animal surveys/inventories/analyses took place in 1990s.
 - 1. Biotic resources report 1993, Jones and Stokes.
 - 2. First OHMVR Division review of pilot 1995, including monitoring data analysis.

3. 5 year OHMVR Division review of pilot 1999, including monitoring data analysis.
 4. Draft Habitat Conservation Plan 2007.
 - v. Current grazer also has grazed at State Parks' Pacheco Pass unit – good working relationship with HHSVRA staff.
- HHSVRA Grazing Management Plan prepared January 2011 by UC Berkeley.
 - i. Approximately \$10,000.
 - ii. Has residual dry matter (RDM) targets for each field.
 - iii. Grazing area 1,155 acres rangeland – mostly grasslands, some oak woodland, much steep terrain.
 - iv. 25 pastures from 9 AC-119AC.
 - Grazing monitoring: LD Ford Rangeland Conservation Science developed monitoring protocols and training program for staff.
 - i. Four year contract approximately \$5,000/year.
 - ii. Monitoring goes into annual report w/analysis and recommendations for subsequent year grazing plan.
 - Grazing Lease
 - i. Current lease runs 01/01/2010-12/31/2014.
 - ii. Longer lease incentivizes grazer to invest in program.
 - iii. Lease can be terminated at any time per contract terms.
 - iv. Identifies how grazing objectives are to be met.
 - v. Payments to state established (\$14/AUM).
 1. Annual payment varies \$9,000-\$15,000.
 - vi. Identifies responsibilities.
 1. Who maintains fences/water systems.
 2. Grazer responsible for all, but HHSVRA assists w/materials and labor when joint management interest present, such as a need to define OHV recreation routes across adjoining grazed open areas.

Comments

- Because of the underlying dedicated funding source (OHV Trust Fund) for management and operations, OHMVR Division has greater discretionary ability than State Parks' general funded units to participate in grazing program related CEQA reviews, monitoring activities, management plans, etc., assuming determination of mutual benefits in the action.
- Grazing operation likely has been unprofitable for the grazer majority of years at HHSVRA, depending upon annual rain cycle present
- HHSVRA doesn't recoup entire costs, but grazing has been determined to be an effective management tool at HHSVRA, given the unique circumstances and conditions as noted in above summary.
- For HHSVRA's management setting and needs, staff finds its grazing program more cost effective/acre treated than other resource treatments such as herbicides, prescribed fire, or mechanical mowing.

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